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LABOUR ORGANISER

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'SENTINEL' in World's Press News
(The National Weekly for Press and Advertising), October 9th, 1953.

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DAILY HERALD

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

Making Democracy Work

by DON ALGER

OVER a period of a few years there is an almost complete change in the personnel of a constituency party and its component branches.

Often there is difficulty in finding sufficient members to fill the many offices of the party. It may be understood that the best and most qualified persons should hold these offices; but this understanding does not of itself produce the persons.

Again, much of the friction (as distinct from the genuine debate) on party policy, and even on party administration, arises from ignorance or misunderstanding of the basic principles and practical realities in obedience to which the party must work.

STRENGTHEN FAITH

The experienced members of the party may realise this; by their contributions to the discussions of the party and by their personal contacts with new members they may do their best to remedy the defects. All this is useful. Nevertheless, the importance of organised effort to strengthen the faith and deepen the wisdom of new members is but little recognised.

Unconsciously, most of us act in the belief that the keenest of the new members will somehow get their own education and wisdom and that there is no point in troubling about the rest.

It is not understood that there is at least a measure of keenness in all new members and that some special effort

should be made to sustain and guide it. Storm and stress are inseparable from politics. We need more and more members with the strength of principle, the grasp of reality, and the sense of responsibility which will enable them to stand firm amid the inescapable turmoil.

I try to put myself in the position of the constituency party agent or secretary who desires to do what is most practical and rewarding in this matter.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Because of the many meetings and conferences which it is necessary to hold for the conduct of ordinary business, it may not be possible to arrange special meetings for the education and encouragement of new members. But the job can be done, at least in part, at the normal meetings.

This means that a portion of the time of these meetings must be set aside for educational purposes. Definite periods must be fixed for administrative business and for the consideration of party policy.

Thus new members who attend the meetings can see that the party is more than a frigid (or even a hectic!) administrative body and that, besides the concern with matters of organisation, there is a really vital concern to get clear minds upon real political problems as well as to fortify general convictions.

Take as a subject one of the general documents of the party, such as "Challenge to Britain". It is possible to divide this document into sections and at a series of ordinary meetings in the course of several months to make a study of each section in turn. It is important to avoid

vague, general discussion for which nobody in particular is prepared and to make clear the why and wherefore of each section and to explore the questions which spring to the minds of the members.

Someone with special knowledge of each section should prepare a synopsis for discussion which should be issued with the notice of the meeting. The same person might open the discussion and be prepared to answer questions so long as everyone present is given an opportunity to speak.

BECOME ALERT

If there are not enough people with special knowledge to take a lead, some ordinary members could be asked to brief themselves for the task. And why not, for a quarter of an hour or so after each discussion have an informal Brains Trust, the members of the team being drawn from those present? The point of the last suggestion is to encourage the members to become intellectually alert.

It is an old scholastic maxim that almost any study has a value because it encourages curiosity and mental discipline. In other words, it helps to form a habit of mind, training the student to give rational as distinct from emotional consideration to whatever is brought to his notice.

In this sense it hardly matters what is studied so long as it is studied thoroughly. Take, for example, agricultural policy. To the major question of why it is essential to produce more food in this country, there is a self-evident answer. But the detailed questions as to the extent to which this can be done in the peculiar circumstances of our land need to be carefully examined before a member can be secure in his grasp of party policy on the issue.

Agriculture is only one of many vital issues. The suggestion for the consideration of such issues in a simple but carefully planned fashion has an important moral purpose. As a result of the consideration, the members of the party begin to feel that they are wanted for more than their subscriptions, their attendance at meetings on routine business, their help in canvassing at elections, etc.

They begin to appreciate that the party wants them to know what it is doing and to secure their contribution to the common understanding. They acquire pride in their membership of a live body; confidence in their ability to uphold the

party's case; and responsibility to themselves and their colleagues.

Such members are an addition to the political as well as the purely numerical strength of the party. Because of this they are also an addition to the administrative strength, realising the true value of subscriptions, propaganda, canvassing and so forth in relation to the great ends in view.

The committee system (i.e., the making of decisions by discussion among the members of a corporate body) is engrained in British life. It is as natural to the people of this country as the air they breathe. Our difficulty is that we do not induce enough people to play an active part in their own tradition. Thus arises the all-too-common disdain of politics in a highly political country.

I have spoken of getting someone to prepare a synopsis and to lead a discussion in the ordinary meetings of the party. But there are other possibilities. In a number of constituencies party members are getting together in their own homes to study and discuss the issues of politics.

In one constituency I know, it is the prospective Parliamentary Candidate who guides the study and leads the discussion. He is helping to solidify both the constituency party and his own position among the electors. He is helping to create a strong, loyal and self-reliant band of members, whose influence will lighten his task when elections come.

TACKLE DIFFICULTIES

Is it too much to ask that discussion shall not be scamped, that points of difficulty shall be tackled if necessary at more than one meeting, that the relevant books and papers shall be made available to those who wish to consult them? We say we want an educated democracy. But as a first step we want an educated, enthusiastic and responsible party membership. We want a larger reserve from which the future officers of the party can be drawn.

Much depends on the time your party can spare for the task. That it must spare some time is manifest. Otherwise the members will become inert or restless and the fortunes of the party will reflect these vices. A sustained effort to bring our members into responsible and enlightened activity would strikingly increase our strength in the country.

ENGLAND ARISE!

UNLESS a man is widely informed in the manners and customs of his fellows he is always liable to grave and embarrassing social blunders. A misadventure of this nature once befell me, and I relate it for the benefit of other young propagandists.

The village concerned is so remote that you would have great difficulty in finding it even on a large-scale map. There is no railway station, and it lies three miles off the nearest main road. When I received, from an unknown secretary, an invitation to address his members at the annual meeting of the Local Labour Party I replied at once accepting, naturally feeling a little flattered.

CHARTING my route carefully beforehand, I drove on an icy January evening to the village, and groping about in the dark I found the Village Hall, lighted but not heated, which I entered at 7.25, proud of my reputation for punctuality. I had been advised that the meeting would begin at 7.30. In solitude and silence I waited.

It got colder and colder as interminable time dragged drearily by. In fact, I waited twenty minutes, for at 7.45 the secretary, a meagre little man weighing about 112 lb. (overcoat and all) bustled in and introduced himself to me. He explained that he had come to tell me he couldn't come, because he was the treasurer of the Flying Club which was holding an important meeting that night.

My slight asperity was instantaneously transformed into an almost dumbstruck veneration. The only flying I had ever done was that of a paper kite in my rôle of an innocent schoolboy. I regarded the unpretentious little man with immeasurable respect. Very deferentially, and with a sense of shame, I disclosed my abysmal ignorance of aeronautics.

I admitted that it gave me great encouragement for the future of Britain to find in that unspoilt arcadia men of the bulldog breed who were keeping abreast of the latest applications of pure science to the needs of the times. Much as I regretted that I should not have the plea-

sure of having him amongst my audience, I agreed with him that it was far more important that he should be dealing with matters on which our future transport and, indeed, national security depended than spending his valuable time listening to anything I could say about political matters.

Whilst I was thus dealing as best I could with an emergency which nobody could have foreseen the expression on the good man's face appeared to change from bewilderment to suspicion or, it might have been, impatience. But when I asked him diffidently whether he thought the time would come when an ordinary chap like me could own an aeroplane, even if it could not fly very fast nor very high, he turned on me with open resentment, and said.

"Ere, oo's leg are you pulling?"

"I ain't pulling nobody's leg," I assured him.

"Well, wot's all this about airypanes?"

"Why," said I, "your Flying Club . . ."

I got no further; he burst out scornfully.

"We don't fly no airypanes in our Club. Wot we flies is pigeons."

LEAVING me crushed, the Local Labour Party secretary cum Flying Club treasurer departed. I huddled my garments closer around my shivering frame and waited for the rank and file of his members to come and listen to the rhetoric now welling up within me. All that happened in half an hour was the hurried passage of a mouse across the floor.

At 8.30 I gave it up. Leaving the light on and the door open I went out into the glittering starry night, and thought up a lot more eloquence as I drove the freezing sixty miles homewards, deciding to debit Profit and Loss Account with five hours of my time and six gallons of petrol.

CAMPAIGNING FOR THE STORMONT

by SAM NAPIER

WE entered the election knowing full well that the Unionist Government would be returned—indeed we said so. Their return to power was evident, because in 25 of the 52 seats for the Northern Ireland House of Commons there were unopposed returns, and all but two of these were official Unionists.

Our theme then was the need for a proper opposition inside the Parliament, if Northern Ireland was to grow up and to have a parliament like democratic countries everywhere else.

We also advocated a policy and programme which would result in the social and economic betterment of the country.

We nominated nine candidates; one of these was a nomination for the first time in the Queens University seat. It is worth remembering that Northern Ireland still has university seats. Queen's, with an electorate of just over 9,000 returns four members, while other constituencies with over 20,000 (and in one case more than 26,000 elect one for each).

Our candidate for the University, incidentally, advocated the abolition of the university franchise. He was, of course, soundly defeated by the graduate vote.

Just before nomination day, Parliament completed legislation affecting electoral procedure. One important change was to permit the unrestricted use of motor vehicles providing the cost of hiring them was returned in the election expenses. The total permitted to be spent by a candidate was not increased; he had the choice of spending it on cars, literature, workers, etc., and indeed Labour candidates hired buses and used them to convey voters to the poll.

As we entered the contest we were conscious of the trend which had begun about a year ago, and which was a comparatively new feature in Northern Ireland elections—the emergence of a 'floating vote'.

In a by-election in the United Kingdom Parliament (Northern Ireland elects twelve

THE Secretary of the Northern Ireland Labour Party tells the story of his party's unsuccessful fight to secure representation in the Parliament of Northern Ireland.

members to Westminster) the Unionist poll fell by 14,000 and their majority was reduced by 10,000, this trend was confirmed by a municipal by-election in August of this year. True to our expectations when reckoning for the recent General Election was taken it was confirmed that the Unionist vote had continued to slump.

In the General Election there were a number of three-cornered fights in which we were involved. In two, our opponents were independent Unionists as well as official Unionists; in two more they were Irish Labour as well as official Unionists.

When the result was declared the Unionists had been returned, but in three of them by a minority of those who voted.

These three-cornered fights were troublesome. Since we had advocated the need for a real opposition in the House of Commons the 'Independents' jumped on this band wagon. That confused some electors in these seats. Voters could not easily remember which of the Labour Parties (Irish or Northern Ireland) the respective candidate represented.

Shortly after the day on which the Prime Minister gave the date of the General Election we issued a pamphlet called 'Where Ulster Labour Stands' this advocated clearly the party's attitude in favour of partition and said why. This was followed by our manifesto which pledged the party to work for full employment and to halt the country's mass emigration; to press the Westminster Government for special consideration for Northern Ireland; to reduce the cost of living and establish parity in all social services with the rest of the United Kingdom.

As the campaign progressed we issued a detailed economic policy and the speeches

of our candidates tended to focus attention upon the economic problems. This resulted in the Prime Minister declaring that the Government would fight upon their record—a novel attitude for the Unionists in Northern Ireland.

When the results were known we had failed to gain a seat, although Pottinger had been lost to us by just over a 100 votes; in Oldpark the Irish Labour Party were unable to win the seat themselves, but spoiled it for us; in Victoria the Labour vote had risen, and a majority of 9,000 against us became 1,600.

The important conclusions to be drawn from the contest are the virtual eclipse of the Irish Labour Party in Northern Ireland. All its candidates were bottom of the poll in the five divisions with republican votes in which it contested. One of its nominees lost his deposit.

The so-called 'Independent Unionists' who are in the main disgruntled Tories, failed to regain Woodvale and lost Shankill which they had held for 28 years,

this was offset by their gain in Clifton.

Three candidates, a Socialist Republican and Independent Labour and an official Irish Labour were elected in divisions with predominantly anti-partitionist tendencies.

So far as the Northern Ireland Labour Party is concerned in the vote that we managed to get 21.58 per cent of the electorate as opposed to 17.60 per cent in 1949. This shows an important swing to us. Independent Unionists as well as Irish Labour cost us votes which we would otherwise have obtained.

At the moment then there have been a number of marginal seats created in Belfast: the Northern Ireland Labour Party vote is increased and the vote against the Government in the contested seats far exceeds the vote they received.

One thing is certain, the people of Northern Ireland are now prepared to accept the Northern Ireland Labour Party as the political party which must oppose the Unionist Party in the Stormont Parliament.

To the
EDITOR

TOO EASY GOING

SIR,—I'm afraid I must cross swords with you in a number of points contained in your article "Take Care With Your Candidates", November issue.

Care, would appear to be the operative word in the title, and yet you know, for an Executive Committee, or even worse, a General Committee, such as mine, composed of an average of 70 attenders at any one meeting, to decide who shall go on to a Municipal Panel on the flimsy evidence you suggest, is just not good enough!

My party, according to you, is one of those parties who have taken matters too far. We are a party where a series of lectures on Local Government, theoretical and practical (from the accumulated knowledge of a council member of long standing) are held, followed by a written examination dealing not only with Local Government, but national, ward and election matters; concluding with a short interview with a sub-committee drawn from the Executive to decide the fitness of a nominee for our Municipal Panel.

By this means we are beginning to ensure that our candidates when nominated are already persons of knowledge and

experience and we are therefore raising the standard of the candidates in whom we invite public confidence. How otherwise does the Editor suggest we can ensure a better type and informed Councillor?

We have had a Labour majority on our County Borough Council since 1928, but I wouldn't like to argue as to the individual merits of its members. Many never said a word for years until they 'learnt the ropes', we have still some whom I've never heard open their mouths in four years.

No, the party is still too easy-going in how it selects its candidates. Some of the points made are quite sound, but we can only get better Socialist local affairs, with better qualified and abler persons.

When you come across people nominated for a panel who think the chief paid officer of the corporation is the Housing Committee chairman, or a councillor who never bothered what local elections cost because the local authority paid for them any way I believe we must demand a better standard.

V. M. THORNES,
Secretary & Agent,
Rotherham C.L.P.

WHY REGISTRATION IS VITAL

by CYRIL FAULKNER

HOW often have you had the experience of witnessing the scene of someone, seething with righteous indignation, bursting into your committee room with the exclamation, "Why is my name not in the Register?" "Why can't I vote?"

Hundreds of votes are lost to the Labour cause, in every election, because "would-be" voters are unregistered and, therefore, ineligible to vote.

I cannot find words emphatic or adequate enough to press home, to every organiser, agent or secretary the vital importance of the Register of Electors. It is the very basis of our electoral organisation and it is imperative that we try to ensure that all our members and supporters are entered therein.

In spite of the care taken in preparing the Registers, mistakes do occur and it is in our political interest—and our job—to remedy these and to make every endeavour to see that the Registers are as accurate and effective as time and circumstances permit. Once published, the Registers become statutory documents and no alterations, additions or deletions are permitted.

WELL PRIMED

All local party and ward secretaries—and key workers—should be well primed as to the importance of the Registers and all of them should be knowledgeable and well briefed concerning the procedure and time-table laid down for their compilation, so that party machinery, at the appropriate time, can be mobilised promptly and efficiently to deal with this very special matter.

I need not refer, here, to the qualifications necessary to be an elector. The household canvass is now proceeding and the qualifying date i.e. November 20th, 1953 (in Scotland December 1st) has now gone by. Registration Officers are now busy compiling the Electoral Lists from

the records of the returned Householders' Forms and of any follow-up inquiry they feel necessary to make.

The most important period for us to remember is between the 10th and 24th January, 1954 (in Scotland 10th-31st) when the Electors Lists are on view and when claims and objections can be lodged. This gives 14 days in which to ensure that the Lists are checked and claims made, should supporters have been omitted or deleted.

Just a word or two about the Electors Lists. List 'A' is a copy of the current Register—which is operative until March 14th next. Any mistakes or omissions in this Register should already have been noted and the information docketed. List 'B' is most important and consists of **newly qualified electors**. They are persons who are qualified for registration as parliamentary or as local government electors in respect of qualifying addresses, i.e. persons who have moved into the area or who have qualified by reason of age, etc.

List 'C' consists of persons **who have ceased to be qualified as electors**, or whose qualification has been altered—those who have moved from the area, etc. This List 'C' should be checked very carefully to ensure that no supporter has been inadvertently entered therein. Information concerning supporters who have moved—should the removals be known—must be passed on to those concerned, so that a check can be made to ensure that they are duly registered in the new area.

Because they contain such vital information, Lists 'B' and 'C' are really gifts from the gods, which any keen organiser will be ready to seize with both hands. From List 'B' it is possible to follow up the newly entered 'Y' voters, and from List 'C' to keep trace of supporters who have moved and who would perhaps otherwise be lost votes.

In all this registration work the importance of keeping marked Registers stands out so very plainly, if this job is to be handled effectively. It should be remembered that the names which appeared on the old register and who have died, need not be included in List 'C'. Their names should be struck out and marked with

the letter 'D' in the copy of the Register published as List 'A'.

The names of newly qualified electors in List 'B' will not be numbered, but the names in List 'C' although not numbered consecutively will have opposite them their numbers in the Register in force.

Adverting now to our elector who burst into the committee room. What do we do with him? Do we just console with him and point out to him that the responsibility to see that he is registered rests upon the individual and then let him go? Why not take his name and address? I find that little duplicated Registration Slips, which just record the full names of such a person, his present address and his address on the qualifying date, i.e. November 20th, to be a most useful form to keep in committee rooms.

Having collected many such names, when the appropriate time comes round, I submit them to the Electoral Registration Officer and at the same time advise the persons concerned to make sure and fill in their Household Form A — or, should they need assistance in this matter to call round to see me.

ELECTORS LISTS

When the Electors Lists are published, it is most important to act promptly and in order to deal adequately with this matter of checking, etc., small committees should be appointed in each ward, village or polling district. Each electoral unit should be made responsible for its particular register. The smaller the units the better, for it has the advantage of spreading the work over more helpers and local knowledge is so very valuable.

Special publicity should be given to the publication of the Electors Lists. In spite of broadcast announcements, advertisements in the Press and other publicity, many are unaware of the places where Lists are available. Copies should be available at public and party meetings, and at similar gatherings in order that everyone can check to safeguard his vote.

A supply of Claim Forms R.P.F.5 can be obtained from the Electoral Registration Officer and should be available at party offices and issued to the appointed committees, so that claims can be made forthwith. Application can be made on behalf of the claimant and the form entered accordingly, although it is better for the claimant himself to fill it in.

Objections to the inclusion of names on the List can be made on the appropriate

form which is R.P.F.6. In these cases it will be necessary to state the grounds of objection and include the registration unit and the name and address of the person making objection.

This business of registration is of paramount importance, flawless organisation lies at the root of every success and the Register of Electors is the basis of all political organisation.

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates at the October meeting of the National Executive Committee:

Tavistock	Mr. H. Lawrance
Huntingdon-shire	Mr. J. A. Franks
Ormskirk	Mrs. M. Ferguson
South Fylde	Mr. D. Page
Holborn & St. Pancras South	Mrs. L. Jeger
North Paddington	Mr. B. T. Parkin
South Paddington	Mr. C. F. H. Wegg-Prosser
Farnham	Mr. J. S. P. Davey
Bromsgrove	Mr. L. J. George
Bradford North	Mr. C. J. Hurley
Sheffield Hallam	Mr. J. Marsden
Galloway	Mr. J. J. McCrossan

Co-operative Candidates running in Association with the Labour Party

Wembley South	Mr. E. C. Hutchison
Wolverhampton South-West	Mr. L. H. Burgess

Withdrawal of Candidatures

Wycombe	Mr. J. Haire
Woolwich West	Mr. J. Silkin
Hornsey	Mr. W. Hamling
Kingston-upon-Thames	Mr. A. A. Verrier
Birmingham, Hall Green	Mr. R. M. Hastie
Bradford North	Mr. E. J. Parris
Ripon	Mr. S. J. Andrews

FEW topics produce more heat among agents than that of canvass systems. It is obvious that the speedy and accurate recording of information on the doorsteps is the very taproot of successful electioneering, but this, in my opinion, is only the beginning. Any system which an organiser uses should be capable of producing a permanent record upon which long-term party development work may be successfully undertaken.



In recent years we've heard a lot about this subject. Many ingenious suggestions have been made. Without exception they have been variants of the 'pasted Register' system. It is my contention that any system which uses the Register page, or a section of a page, as its fundamental must fail to produce all the information needed, and complicates rather than simplifies election machinery.

The real test surely is that ideally we should have machinery that, at all stages in a campaign, makes it possible for us to deal with each elector *individually*. Unless this 'breakdown' in our system is possible we shall always be a long way short of perfection, and in the marginal seats every vote counts.

Of course, it can be argued that where there is either an overwhelming Labour or Anti-Labour vote in a constituency and the result is not in doubt, something a good deal less than 100 per cent efficiency in the canvass system is immaterial. Simplicity and cheapness is therefore justified. But such an argument is specious.

If the Labour vote is potentially overwhelming then the canvass system should be capable of polling the absolute maximum to add to the aggregate 'national' poll—if the reverse applies, the eventual capture of the seat will depend upon the patient accumulation of support over the years.

There is one system only that meets all these requirements. It has puzzled me for many years that so many of my colleagues have failed to appreciate that the Individual Canvass Card system, properly used, is the royal road to electoral success.

SINGLE CARD FOR C

I submit that the Individual Canvass Card is simpler; saves time; is more efficient; makes a more intensive campaign possible; has infinite flexibility and gives the agent absolute control over the canvass. Finally, if the suggestion I have to make is followed, it is as cheap as the simplest of pasted card systems.

With the necessity of providing for the postal voter, it is becoming more and more necessary to collate information earlier than in the past. On the assumption that an election will occur on a given register Canvass cards can be written immediately the 'B' and 'C' lists become available. The numbering can be done later when an election is imminent and as part of the routine 'checking' procedure in the committee rooms.

The cards are available as soon as written and before the register can be obtained. Pre-election canvassing for membership, for postal voters, and for other useful information can be commenced.

If an election is postponed it is still a simple matter to correct the cards and bring them up to date by reference to subsequent 'B' and 'C' lists. By making suitable provision, cards can be re-numbered several times and can be planned to extend over several registers or elections. The information remaining on the cards and the permanent record that exists, becomes a real asset.

It is easier to record information on a Canvass Card and there is less margin for error. With any pasted register system, even if the cards are carefully ruled, it is difficult to record information accurately because of the small print employed. Extracting information in the committee room is a slow and laborious task.

Special information, vitally necessary to an election, must be recorded on a separate sheet or elsewhere. If a canvasser is the least bit careless (and who could blame him on a cold, dark, windy night) he may even omit the name of the person about whom he makes a special record. With

D IS BEST NVASS

an individual card the whole story can be obtained with adequate room for entries and no misunderstanding can arise.

After canvass the cards themselves can be sorted into the various categories the agent requires. 'Fors', 'Againsts', 'Doubtfuls', 'Postal Voters' can be sorted out and special treatment provided if thought to be desirable. It is this factor more than anything else which makes the individual card supreme.

The 'Fors' can be sorted and indexed for use as 'promise cards' on polling day. The writing up of separate 'polling slips' or 'promise forms' is obviated.

Removals, both traced and untraced, and deceased can be put on one side and returned to the Central Office, if special machinery is provided for dealing with them, as is generally done.

Doubtfuls when sorted, can be recanvassed. The 'Againsts' can be placed on one side and removed from all further consideration. Labour supporters requiring cars on polling day can be pulled out after times have been clearly marked.

The preparation of the Canvass Return becomes a simple matter for the process of sorting only requires a count to be made for the necessary information to be obtained speedily, and automatically.



The 'flexibility' which is so outstanding is demonstrated even more sharply on polling day. With few workers whole roads can be handed to 'knockers up'. As more workers become available cards can be 'broken down' in sections of roads or groups of buildings. 'Cleaning' up, as polling proceeds becomes a simple matter of extracting cards in respect of polled support.

During the day this can be done from the returned poll cards or number sheets from the gates. During the evening, if polling is heavy, they can be 'cleaned' visually from the number board quickly and efficiently. Even at peak periods it is possible by good committee room work and careful training to keep cards cleaned without delay.

The pasted register card cannot be broken down on polling day if it is used for knocking up, and the 'cleaning' of the card is more difficult. If polling slips or promise cards are written up from the pasted register card then an unnecessary duplication of work is being undertaken that the individual card system avoids.

It has always been my conviction that detailed information as to the canvass ought to be known by the agent and his committee room clerks only. It seems to me to be undesirable for anyone to walk into a committee room and see at a glance how the canvass is proceeding. And yet, with some pasted register systems this visual indication is regarded as a desirable feature.

The individual card, used in conjunction with a 'marked' register and a number board, keeps the canvass information confidential. The 'quantity' of work yet to

by **LESLIE** —————
HILLIARD

be done can readily be seen—the 'quality' of the work can only be obtained by reference to the marked register, the canvass returns, or the number board, all of which are under the control of the committee room clerk and not readily accessible.

A really 'scientific' approach to electioneering just isn't possible unless the individual card is used. As the years pass an agent builds up a marked register. In my constituency, and I believe this to be fairly common practice, we have a record of the 'Fors', 'Againsts', 'Doubtfuls', 'Postal Voters', 'Window Bill exhibitors', etc.

Infinite refinements to suit all local circumstances are possible. Using the marked register different coloured cards can be used for all categories of electors. The canvassers can see at a glance before making a call who are members, supporters, newly qualified, or previously uncanvassed—extremely valuable information as it conditions the approach on the doorstep!

Further, such 'colour coding' (which I have now used in a number of elections with excellent results) enables the committee room staff to employ new, inexperienced or diffident canvassers in contacting Labour households, asking them to show window bills or offer help, thus ensuring a friendly reception and building up confidence.

The more experienced canvassers can

be set to work, at once, dealing with the newly qualified and uncanvassed or doubtfuls thus breaking new ground and building up fresh support.

Great economy in operation can be effected in this way for it is possible to exclude from consideration 'confirmed' anti-Labour voters, concentrating what help one has in that section where maximum returns and support can be mobilised. Such an approach means that more time can be spent with each likely contact and the canvass card can be redesigned to produce much more comprehensive information for use in the immediate or future election campaigns or membership drives.



The list is endless and I could go on indefinitely. The best test is to try it yourself, but remember to get the best out of the system you must understand what you can do with it first and then take steps to see that your workers understand too and know what you want. Specialist training in writing cards and in handling them on the doorsteps, in the committee rooms and at the centre is necessary for maximum efficiency.

And, since I am assured, that some of my colleagues have never even seen the system, perhaps I should explain the basic requirements.

In its simplest form a standard card is designed on which is written the name, address and electoral number. It provides space for political opinion to be recorded and for other special information, including details of removals, to be entered.

These cards can be punched with a hole at bottom and can then be bundled in road order, using treasury tags or rubber bands. They are stored in wooden boxes which can be made up in sets covering all PD's.

Sufficient boxes should be provided to enable a spare to be used in each committee room for the confirmed Labour promise to be transferred as the canvass proceeds. An added refinement is to write road index cards which are inserted in front of the appropriate canvass cards. The whole equipment is very tidy and, if cards of reasonable size are used, not unduly bulky. 50,000 cards can be stored in about 12 boxes.

I use the system in a more elaborate form and in conjunction with a marked

register. Cards are not written for 'confirmed' anti-Labour voters (known Tories). A different colour is used for each of the categories of electors:

Party members	Yellow card.
Labour supporters	Pink card.
Newly qualified and previously uncanvassed	Green card.
Doubtfuls from previous elections	Blue Card.

Between elections, membership development is carried out using the 'Pink' cards. During an election the canvass proceeds in three streams, directed at (1) Party members, (2) Labour supporters and (3) newly qualifieds, etc. Second canvassing, if and when opportunity exists, is directed at the 'doubtfuls'. Specimens of the main cards used are available on request.

Finally, as to cost. Printing individual canvass cards is a very expensive business. 12s. 6d. to 15s per 1,000 are reasonable estimates of cost. For 50,000 electors this is a substantial sum especially if the cards are to be used once. It is this, as much as anything else I feel sure, that has been responsible for the increasing use of 'pasted' register systems. The answer is to **DUPLICATE** them. My cards cost me 2s. 6d. per 1,000. You can do the same. I can tell you where to obtain suitable board and how to do the job. I should be happy to let you have this information.

New Agents

W. A. GOFF to Epping. Agent at Wellingborough for the past two years, Ashley Goff moves to Epping in the New Year. He has qualified for the Grade A Certificate for Proficiency, and was in control of the Parliamentary Election in 1951 at Wellingborough. Epping includes the Harlow New Town and has been without a full-time Agent since 1947.

T. W. IVES to Nottingham City Party. Tommy Ives, age 29, hails from Liverpool and has been Secretary/Agent to the North Kensington Party since 1949. He was the Election Agent at the 1950 and 1951 General Elections and at the London County Council, and Borough Council Elections in that constituency. He has assisted at various by-elections in, and around, London during the past six years. He takes up his appointment on the 1st January, 1954.

Full-time Collector or Agent?

(Part of a discussion which took place between John F. Muir and Jim McGrandle, Assistant Scottish Organisers, after a visit to a Constituency Labour Party Meeting.)

John: The other night I visited a constituency and they are proposing to appoint a full-time collector. I suggested the whole question should be examined, because in my opinion it would be much better to appoint an agent.

Jim: Well I take a different viewpoint. I feel we should encourage parties to go ahead and appoint a membership collector and build up their funds before appointing a full-time agent. We get the same complaint all the time — hundreds of members, but how are they to be collected?

John: Yes, I get the same complaint too—but surely this is just one of the organisational problems which continually confronts us. Our aim should be to see that the organisation is brought up to a high degree of efficiency

Jim: without money and the agent spending all his or her time trying to find a salary?

John: and one of his jobs would be to find collectors just as he would find secretaries and chairmen or any other officer.

Jim: What are we finding to-day? There is a large potential membership in every constituency. Men and women who would gladly pay a monthly contribution and at the same time take part in one or other of the Party's activities. Because we are unable to keep contact with those people through a collector we lose them. The position in Scotland is that there are very few constituencies who will be able to employ a full-time agent *until*—and I repeat *until*—the problem of individual membership collections is solved.

John: Take any constituency we visit and what do we find? Elections come and elections go, but seldom do we get the same person planning the campaign. It means all the work done in the past is lost. Now an agent can build up records;

keep in touch with the local parties or wards and help plan their work. You and I spend a lot of time talking to parties about a planned syllabus, but because we have no one available to give their time to the job very often the opportunity is lost.

Jim: You haven't mentioned finance at all. Time after time agents are appointed to what appears a constituency with a healthy bank account. Then we find from that the agent's salary has to be paid; as well as offices' expenses—which were once very small have increased considerably; and, of course, the agent has expenses too. Slowly but surely the balance sheet gets steadily worse then come the parting of the ways . . . you and I have seen this happen.

John: Well this problem is now before us and we have to get a solution to it. I can recognise what the ideal solution would be but . . . well the question is money.

Jim: Yes, I too recognise what is wanted but we have to work on what we have and what we can be sure of.

Buy these two important publications

- **Election Charts and Forms**
1/2d. post free
- **Practical Illustrations of
Committee Rooms**
1/8d. post free

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STAGING THE ANNUAL MEETING

Ken Peay

Urges secretaries to make their Annual Meeting a means of raising morale

SOME party secretaries treat annual general meetings as a nuisance to be disposed of with the minimum of trouble. Others realise their potential value as a means of creating goodwill and raising Party morale.

No difficulty is presented in fulfilling the formal purpose of an annual meeting. It is easy enough to hold a meeting, do a little stocktaking and elect officers. By taking a little extra trouble an excellent impression can be made on members, and valuable press reports obtained.

Careful consideration should be given to the place where the meeting is to be held. Some parties hold their monthly meetings in dreary and uncomfortable halls. For an annual meeting it is well worth while spending a little extra money on hiring a really comfortable meeting place.

Preference should be given to a hall used by other reputable local organisations for important occasions. If the council chamber can be placed at your disposal, so much the better.

Under the rules the term of office for a delegate expires at the end of the ordinary monthly meeting prior to the annual meeting. It is therefore necessary to invite affiliated and Party organisations to appoint, or re-appoint, delegates to take office as from the annual meeting.

Attendance List

Remember that officers and executive committee members who are not re-appointed as delegates are eligible to attend the annual meeting for reporting purposes, although they cannot exercise voting rights. When inviting organisations to appoint delegates, furnish them with a list showing their existing representatives' attendances at meetings.

The rules also provide that delegates shall be given twenty-eight days notice of

the annual meeting. While this provision must be complied with, it is desirable that relevant documents should be dispatched within ten days of the meeting.

The meeting can be made more attractive if arrangements are made for a speaker. If your Member of Parliament, or prospective candidate, is not available, a dignitary from a neighbouring party might be called upon.

If facilities are available, arrange for light refreshments to be served. They will provide a welcome break in the proceedings if served immediately after the completion of formal business but prior to any speeches. So much the better if they can be provided free of charge. It will prove a novelty for members who are only too used to paying for the privilege of attending meetings.

Great Day

Well before the great day, tactfully discover whether officers are prepared to seek re-election. Only too frequently do they fail to give adequate notice of their intention to refuse re-nomination. It can be embarrassing, as well as potentially dangerous, to have to hawk round the treasurership at an annual meeting.

It is advisable to ensure that capable persons will be available at the meeting for election as tellers and scrutineers.

Time will be saved if various documents are sent out in advance of the meeting. These can include the annual report, financial report and balance sheet, agenda and minutes of the last annual meeting.

If the annual report is to be printed, it is worthwhile making it attractive. Many parties still produce dull, documents in 8-pt. type, with never a thought to varying black print on white paper. Incident-

WIMBLEDON C.L.P. — Well-appointed Labour Hall and office, compact constituency, increasing membership and local representation, invite applications for the post of Secretary/Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from Mr. F. J. Parker, 267 The Broadway, Wimbledon, S.W.19, to whom they must be returned not later than the 21st December, 1953.

(Turn to page 222 for other advertisements)

ally make sure the report is produced sufficiently early to obtain the Executive Committee's approval. It is much more satisfactory if the committee as a whole takes responsibility for its contents.

By advance circulation of the financial report and balance sheet, delegates have an adequate opportunity of satisfying themselves about the party's money. Similarly, if minutes are sent out in advance, the meeting will probably accept them without the necessity of formal reading.

To help create the right atmosphere and to make an impression on the party as a whole, it is a good plan to invite all members to attend the meeting as visitors. To ensure that unauthorised persons are

not admitted, visitors can be asked to produce their membership cards.

As attendances at well organised annual meetings are larger than at ordinary monthly meetings, it is well worth organising a literature stall. Copies of the party rules and standing orders should be available.

Local Press

The local press can usually be persuaded to publish a story mentioning the annual meeting about a week prior to the event. The basis for this can normally be found in the annual report. Immediately after the meeting, a suitably edited report of the proceedings should be sent to the local press, together with biographical details of newly elected officers.

Close Accounts Promptly

FOR party treasurers the 31st December is the most important date in the year. This is the date at which Constituency and Local Labour Party books should be closed.

Some treasurers have a tendency to keep their books open for a further four or six weeks. This is unwise. It is far better to close the books with the minimum of delay, and show any amounts received later, in the accounts for the following year.

An up-to-date bank pass-book statement will be required to enable you to reconcile your books with the bank account. It will also provide the auditors with a means of checking the accuracy of your figures.

Prepare separate reports for each type of account authorised by the party. In addition to the general fund, they might include municipal and parliamentary election funds, property and fixtures accounts and a social fund. Make sure that *all* party money, even if some of it is normally held by the social committee secretary, is shown in the final report.

It is not sufficient merely to prepare a statement of accounts. A properly compiled balance sheet should be drawn up, showing the party's assets and liabilities. Assets should include property (after allowing for depreciation), fixtures (office equipment, amplifiers, etc.), cash in hand

and at the bank, stock (such as stationery) any bonds or shares, and any amounts due but not received before the end of the financial year. Items shown as liabilities should include outstanding debts (including any mortgage on property) and credit balances in various funds.

After preparing a statement of accounts and a balance sheet, ask the auditors to examine the books as quickly as possible. Make sure that *all* the books are available, including receipt books and the minute book.

When the auditors have satisfied themselves as to the accuracy of the accounts, be certain that they sign a master copy of the annual financial report and balance sheet. Duplicated copies can then be produced for circulation to all delegates well before the annual meeting.

If your annual meeting is not held until the end of March, it is advisable to prepare an up-to-date statement of accounts, showing the financial position for the first two and a half months of the new year. If quarterly audits are not the general practice in your party, the auditors can be asked to check this second statement of accounts.

Should your party elect a new treasurer, it is essential that the auditors should satisfy themselves about the books before they are passed over to him.

Last month's article showed the great importance of the postal vote. Here, the way to obtain the maximum registration of Labour supporters is explained.

Postal Vote: Act Now!

says LEN SIMS

HAVING stressed the importance that should be attached to postal voting, the next thing is to make suggestions on what should be done.

The first thing to get quite clear is that preparations must be started **AT ONCE**.

A hasty attempt when the election is about to break will not do. It is impossible then to trace removals, list the sick and infirm, and inform those whose work takes them away from home. It may well be, that as a result of indiscriminate delivery of R.P.F. forms, we get more Tories placed on the Absent Voters List.

Where no effective marked Register exists, I suggest a special canvass should be planned for January. It is sufficiently far ahead to make adequate preparations and will coincide with the publication of the Electors Lists.

An inspection of Lists B and C will show the extent of moving in and out of each area. List B (newly-qualified electors), taken in conjunction with List A (current Register) will give all (excepting the few additions or deletions as a result of claims and objections) who will be registered in the polling district until the 16th March, 1955.

A systematic street by street canvass, starting with our favourable areas, should be planned. During the two weeks allowed for Claims and Objections special attention can be given to places where movement of population is greatest—housing estates, blocks of flats, etc., to ensure that all qualified persons are, in fact, included.

Canvassers should be armed with our postal vote leaflet and R.P.F. forms; each canvasser should have a copy of our booklet which explains the postal vote.

It will take time and patience to build up an effective organisation, and a member should be appointed as Postal Vote and Removals Officer (remember there are internal removals as well). It is not a job the secretary, or agent, can do in addition to his other duties. It will be necessary to create machinery at constituency, local

and ward level—the aim being to get it down to a street or streets basis. By doing this we shall cover all our supporters—and beat the Tories.

Once the canvass has been completed and the marked Register compiled, by developing the listing of information in conjunction with the collecting of subscriptions, both can be made efficient. Who should know better than the street collector who is sick, works away from home, or is moving to another area?

It is easy to say the Tories have better facilities than we have to gather this information, it may be so—but don't make that an excuse to do nothing about it.

Look at the avenues we can explore. We have the Trade Union movement: branch secretaries, having the interests of their members at heart, would doubtless co-operate. Why not offer to talk it over with them? This would apply especially to transport workers, building squads and installation engineers. Hospital employees are organised, so we have a line of approach there.

The hospitals themselves provide a problem. Why not an approach to representatives of Hospital Committees to see that facilities are afforded patients to vote by post? As this is a matter of concern to all parties, there can be united action.

There is the Co-operative Movement. There must be a considerable number of co-operators who move during the course of the year from one area to another. Finally we have our Women's Sections—they should be approached.

What are the main provisions of the law?

REMOVALS (Parliamentary Elections only).

Removals usually comprise the largest proportion of entries on the Absent Voters List. It is, therefore, most important and should be fully understood.

Remember, that all removals after 28th November, 1953 (1st December in Scotland) will be registered at their old address until 16th March, 1955. That is, from the

qualifying date of the 1954 Register until the publication of the next Register of Electors in 1955.

With the development of housing estates (often just outside the borough) and the new towns, it is essential to pay very careful attention to this fact.

The next point to remember is that to qualify it is necessary to move outside the **Borough, Urban District or Rural Parish** (Burgh or County Electoral District in Scotland).

This means that moving from one Birmingham constituency to another would not qualify. On the other hand, it would be possible to move from one rural parish to another (or to a borough or urban district) *within* the same constituency and be in a position to claim to vote by post.

Consideration must first be given to those who have moved **OUT** of the area, as they have the vote you require. This does not mean that we must ignore the newcomers—far from it. Help and advice should be given them, if supporters, and the information passed on to the appropriate Constituency Labour Party. This is essential if they have moved from a marginal constituency, where they will still be registered.

Application for this postal vote can be made at any time, and the name remains on the Absent Voters List until the publication of a new Register. The form to be used is R.P.F.8.

EMPLOYMENT.

This section covers two categories, those whose job takes them away from home regularly, such as commercial travellers, and those whose work is such as to make it uncertain if they will be able to vote in person, such as shift workers.

The former can apply at any time and, once granted a postal vote, it will continue indefinitely, or until cancelled. The latter should apply when an election becomes imminent as they have more chance of being granted postal votes as their duty turns on polling day will be known.

The form to be used is R.P.F.7 and covers local government as well as parliamentary elections (excepting, in England and Wales, rural and parish elections).

INCAPACITY.

Here again we have two categories. There are those who are more or less permanently incapacitated as a result of illness or infirmity and could not go to the polling station, or vote unaided. In

this case the doctor in signing the certificate attached to the application form would state the incapacity was permanent. Once granted, it continues indefinitely, unless cancelled.

Those who, for some reason or another, are temporarily laid up, say in hospital or confined to bed, should make application when an election becomes imminent, the doctor signing the certificate indicating the period he thinks the incapacity will continue.

The form for both of these cases is R.P.F.7 plus signed certificate. The postal vote is available for parliamentary and local government elections (except, in England and Wales, rural and parish elections).

THE BLIND.

The blind are entitled to vote by post. If registered with the local authority there is no need for the doctor to sign the certificate. The form is the same as above, and covers the same elections.

THOSE WHO HAVE TO TRAVEL BY SEA OR AIR TO VOTE.

This applies, in the main, to the islands off the coast of Scotland.

This vote applies to parliamentary and local elections as above and the form is R.P.F.7a.

ELECTION OFFICIALS.

In every election there are a number of persons engaged in elections, such as presiding officers, clerks and constables. A postal vote or a certificate to vote at any polling station can be obtained for that particular election. The form to be used is R.P.F.9.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.

Candidates, and their wives or husbands, if contesting in constituency other than the one in which they are registered, can obtain a postal vote for that particular election.

The form in this case is R.P.F.9.

The latest time for claiming.

The last day on which application can be received by the local Electoral Registration Officer to vote by post (or to appoint a proxy or to cancel such applications):

Parliamentary Elections. Not later than the **TWELFTH DAY** before the day of the Poll (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays).

Local Government Elections. Not later than the last day for the delivery of nomination papers.

WRITE ABOUT CHRISTMAS

"WRITE about 'achievement'," said the Editor.

"Write about 'Christmas,'" said the gremlin as he perched on my pencil.

"We're dreaming of a white Christmas," sang two merry matelots as they leaned against the door of the 'Green Dragon' in Forge Lane.

"Turn left by the fish and chip shop," said the gremlin.

"I tell you—write about 'achievement,'" growled the Editor.

"Knock at the door of number 8," ordered the gremlin.

The tang of tar and salt was in the air when I banged on the door of 8 Christmas Street, to be greeted by Daisy Peacock and Tim, her handsome ginger cat. Daisy was putting finishing touches on babies' vests which she had made for Gillingham's Labour Christmas Bazaar.

"When did you join the Labour Party?"

"Forty years ago," said Daisy.

"You've done a tidy bit of work for the Movement."

"No more than any of the others," said Daisy.

"She's got the blood of sea-dogs in her veins," whispered the gremlin, "any land-lubber will tell you that the Peacocks of Gillingham have skippered ships, owned yachts, and sailed out of *Jillyingham Water* since the days of Charles II."

More than twenty years ago, when depression struck the industries of the Medway towns, Daisy and a handful of determined women started to agitate.

"It's time the local Party had a home of its own," they argued.

Agitation was matched by work. One day they said to the Party chairman.

"You know that nice plot of land in Belmont Road?"

"Yes!"

"Here are the deeds, we women have bought the land; now let us get together and build our Labour Hall!"

There is a celebration being planned, for February 1954, to commemorate the 21st Anniversary of the opening of Gillingham Labour Hall.

Ships in the Medway hooted and groaned through the winter mist as I

trudged to Belmont Road. There was warmth and light streaming from the windows of the Labour Hall.

"Now write about 'achievement,'" hissed the Editor.

I pushed open the door marked 'Office'. Behind a desk stood a familiar figure. Where had I seen him before? He was a portly, white-whiskered, old toff; clad in scarlet cloak and hat; and he shoved out a handshake with a grip like a boat-swain's mate.

"He ain't no Father Christmas," screamed the gremlin, "he's a sea dog! I know him—he served on the King's ships—the *Repulse*, *Tiger*, *Carysfort*, *Resource*, *Nelson* and *Revenge*. I know him, he caught a packet in the *Penelope* in 1943—out in the Mediterranean."

Things are done in ship-shape fashion down at Gillingham. More than eight hundred children will be entertained by the Labour Party over the festive season.

So it was that Commander Russell Lavers, O.B.E., R.N., (Rtd), Prospective Labour Candidate was trying out his *Santa* rig in anticipation of the children's demands for his services.

Achievement? Every 'Y' voter gets a letter every month signed by Russell Lavers. The marked register is well on the way to completion, and every 'Doubtful' voter recorded at the office receives a letter every month signed by Russell Lavers.

There are more than 5,000 Service Voters on the register for Gillingham, and nearly 7,000 electors will be away from home when the General Election comes along.

For months not a week has gone by without the prospective candidate and the Party agent, Ray Cook, going on to the doorsteps to chase up the 'Doubtfuls' and 'Outs'.

Achievement? Individual membership at Gillingham:—

Year	1938	...	...	...	589
"	1941	...	...	...	240
"	1945	...	...	...	540
"	1952	...	...	...	2,546

And by Christmas Day, 1953, individual

membership will exceed 3,300.

Outside a fish and chip shop on the corner of Christmas Street, two boys are singing *Silent Night*.

In the bar parlour of the 'Green Dragon' we join our comrades of Medway Ward.

"I'll give you a Christmas toast," shouted the gremlin, "*To sea-dogs, land-lubbers, editors and gremlins—God bless you, and may all our ships come safely home to port!*"

Southern

F. SHEPHERD

Scillonian Socialists

YOU have all heard of the Isles of Scilly, of their spring flowers, and their peaceful holiday attractions. I do not suppose many people connect this beautiful group of islands with party politics in any way.

I suppose few people realise that the islands are over forty miles from the coast of Cornwall, twice as far out to sea as the coast of France is from Dover, and that the seas between the Cornish coast and the islands is sometimes so rough that the journey can be very unpleasant. Under fair weather conditions it takes *The Scillonian* four hours to do the trip, but if you go by air, you can do the journey in fourteen minutes, that is provided conditions are favourable, and when they are not, you cannot travel at all.

However, this is not a holiday guide, it is to say that party politics are playing quite an important part in the life and make-up of the people on the Scilly Isles, and when the Assistant National Agent went there for a holiday in the early summer, she certainly started something, which resulted in my going over there with Jim Callaghan, meeting a group of Party members, having conversations with Labour councillors, and holding a public meeting.

A Local Labour Party, in the hands of capable officers, with fifty individual members, are making their presence felt. The five Labour councillors are playing an active part in Local Government affairs. The Local Party has been linked up with the St. Ives Constituency Party. The group of Labour councillors has been linked up with the Local Government Department at Transport House, and political activity has commenced in true style.

Jim Callaghan was announced as the first Labour M.P. to address a public

meeting on the islands. Although our air trip was very pleasant, the weather on the islands was atrocious; it rained and blew with terrific force. Imagine our surprise then, when close on 100 people turned up for the meeting. Their enthusiasm for the Labour point of view was displayed by a collection which would have done credit to a big meeting in some of our heavily populated centres of support.

Jim Callaghan gave a rattling good speech. He did not promise that the next Labour Government would repeal the recently imposed Income Tax, but he did urge the islanders to see that they got value for the money they were paying, and pointed out the lack of amenities on the islands as compared with those enjoyed by people on the mainland.

Walking down the one main street, Jim was highly amused and interested to hear himself announced as the speaker for the evening, by the Town Crier.

It was certainly a flying visit, for we arrived at midday; we occupied all the afternoon by interviewing supporters, visited the island's School, and addressed a public meeting. By 9 a.m. the following morning, we caught the plane back to the mainland.

Maybe in time and money it was an expensive trip, but the Labour Party's faith and hope in democracy is such that every group of electors, no matter how difficult to reach, or how small in numbers, must be given the opportunity to organise public opinion and play a full part in the life of local and national Government.

South Western

E. V. REES

Eastern Rally

OUR Regional Rally, at Cambridge, on October 24th, was the best we have ever had. Forty Constituency Labour Parties and many trade union Organisations were represented by 1,200 members, and it was good to realise that this annual event is now firmly established.

The beauty and power of the Guildhall organ were expressed in impressive renderings by Mr. Faux and the community singing uplifted the vast audience again and again. It was grand.

Barbara Castle and Jim Griffiths were the speakers. They were on top form and

when this happens you have a platform which it would be difficult to excel.

The outstanding feature was the presentation of a substantial cheque to Gertrude Francis, who relinquishes her post as Regional Women's Organiser at the end of this year. That marvellous veteran Mrs. Clara Rackham made the presentation on behalf of the Regional Council and she did it exceedingly well.

In her response Miss Francis recalled the work in the early days and postulated that the task of actually bringing about the Socialist Society was a more difficult and challenging one than the propagation of Socialist principles to audiences both large and small, friendly and unfriendly, which used to assemble under the Red Flag in bygone days.

The Rally was preceded by a luncheon given in honour of Miss Francis and at this we experienced the pleasure of having with us the speakers, the Chief Woman Officer, the Assistant National Agent and Miss Bamford, who is Miss Francis's closest and dearest friend.

At the luncheon Charles Leatherland presided in his usual handsome style, whilst Arthur Lewis, M.P. (Chairman of the Regional Parliamentary Group) made a fine Chairman at the Rally itself.

Well, it was a great day and we are grateful to the Cambridge City Agent and his colleagues for their wholehearted and efficient co-operation.

Eastern

W. T. YOUNG

Postal Votes

I HAVE been thinking about the much, but not over, emphasised importance of our constituency and local parties doing something NOW about the registration of Labour supporters as postal voters. In Yorkshire, all the usual lines have been pursued and the normal steps are constantly being retraced.

A new step has been taken in the form of not only enlisting the aid of the trade union district officers but of providing them with the ammunition. Each trade union which is likely to have members who are away from home at intervals because of their occupation has been invited to co-operate. Use is being made of the leaflet recently issued by Headquarters and to save time the leaflets have been overprinted with the Regional Council's address from where all applications will

be forwarded to the appropriate party secretary.

The response to date has been quite satisfactory and thought is being given to the possibility of a follow up, if time permits, when a General Election seems imminent.

Where constituency and local parties have made direct contact with the staff employed at depôts of the British Road Services a considerable number of Labour supporters have been enrolled as postal voters. In the marginal constituencies with small majorities for or against us this simple contact can mean the difference between victory and defeat at an election.

North Eastern

J. T. ANSON

QUESTION AND ANSWER

IS it true that after the expiration of two years following a Parliamentary Election an agent can apply to the Returning Officer for the "Return of Election Expenses"?

If so can the present Election Agent apply irrespective of whether he acted as Election Agent or not on that occasion?

ANSWER: Section 72 (2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1949, provides that, after the expiration of the two years (during which they are open for inspection), the Return and Declarations shall be destroyed or, *if the candidate or his election agent so require*, be returned to the candidate.

The election agent in this case would be the one appointed by the candidate at that election. I see no reason why the present election agent should not apply on behalf of the candidate or get the candidate himself to apply.

This is an interesting question in view of the fact that applications can now be made in respect of Returns and Declarations submitted in respect of the 1951 General Election.

There is a proviso that returns and declarations sent in under Section 63 (authorisations, etc.) can be returned to the sender, not the candidate, if requested by the candidate or his election agent.